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SUBJECT: POLITICAL TENSIONS GROW AS MAPUTO II APPROACHES

REF: A. 09 ANTANANARIVO 589

[1](#)B. 09 ANTANANARIVO 596

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Classified By: POLOFF JEFFREY HULSE FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: International mediators have set a date for a second round of talks (August 24-27) in Maputo, Mozambique, bringing together the Big Four political leaders in Madagascar's ongoing crisis. The focus will be the division of posts in an eventual unity government, in accordance with the original Maputo agreement of August 9 (reftel A), but disagreements between the political movements of Andry Rajoelina and Marc Ravalomanana continue to pose a problem. Rajoelina has made clear his intention to remain in the presidency of a transition government, while Ravalomanana's supporters recently announced that their participation in Maputo II will be contingent upon the release of Manandafy Rakotonirina, Ravalomanana's anointed shadow Prime Minister. The pro-Ravalomanana legalists have put a stop to their daily rallies in Tana, and there have been no further arrests or security incidents since Maputo I - but differing interpretations of Maputo I, combined with weak interim follow-up from the international mediators, may delay the next phase of an already long process. END SUMMARY.

MAPUTO II PLANNED FOR AUGUST 24-27

[1](#)2. (C) Sources within SADC have indicated that Joaquim Chissano (former President of Mozambique and head of the "Joint Mediation Team to Madagascar" (JMTM), which also includes representatives of the AU, the UN, and the OIF) will return to Madagascar on/around August 21. The JMTM will conduct two days of meetings with the four political movements' representatives in Madagascar, and then accompany the delegations to Mozambique on August 24 for a follow-up round of talks, dubbed Maputo II. The Big Four (Andry Rajoelina, Marc Ravalomanana, Didier Ratsiraka, and Albert Zafy) will meet for two days, and depart on August 27; per Maputo I, Ravalomanana will remain abroad, Ratsiraka may end his current exile in France if he wishes, and Rajoelina and Zafy will return to Madagascar.

[1](#)3. (C) OIF representative Edem Kojdo flatly stated on August 11 to members of the International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M) that the sole item on the agenda for Maputo II was the division of positions in the transition government. However, differing interpretations on the six agreements signed in Maputo I has led to a very public argument here between the current transition regime (the HAT) and the supporters of Ravalomanana. While the HAT has "released" nine of 12 key political detainees identified by Ravalomanana's team for consideration under an amnesty deal

(to date, Ravalomanana's movement has identified 56 detainees they believe should be released, but they are likely to be more flexible beyond this core 12), the conditions of their release has raised tensions further. Four politicians accused of complicity with recent bombings were forced to sign a document promising to abide by the Maputo accords, and may still be re-arrested as they were never actually charged during their month-long detention. Four TIM parliamentarians were finally tried, after being detained since April 23, and given one-year suspended sentences - which they intend to appeal, and which regardless do not comply with the notion of amnesty. Ihanta Randriamandranto, leader of the "Legalist Women" who was arrested on April 29, was released on bail, but will later face trial.

14. (C) The remaining three high-profile prisoners are Ravalomanana's shadow Prime Minister, Manandafy Rakotonirina, and two colonels who were arrested with him (and Randriamandranto) on April 29. Gendarmerie sources recently informed RSO FSNI that the security forces have no objection to the release of the two colonels, but that the HAT political leadership hasn't yet concurred. As for Rakotonirina, he was offered the same terms as the four suspected bombers, but has refused on principle to sign a document which would restrict his political freedom; he remains in house arrest outside of Antananarivo.

#### GROWING CONFLICT BETWEEN THE RAVALOMANANA AND RAJOELINA CAMPS

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15. (C) Ravalomanana's supporters have widely disseminated a statement calling for respect of the Maputo I accords, and specifically for the release of Rakotonirina. They have indicated in private as well that they may boycott Maputo if he is not released, and they back his decision against

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signing the HAT's document on the grounds that Article 2 of Accord No. 2 from Maputo I states that the four leaders have called for "the cessation of current legal proceedings and the immediate liberation of political detainees resulting from the events of 2009". Rajoelina's advisors informed emboff, however, that they see the simple document as the only guarantee they have that these liberated detainees will themselves abide by the Maputo accords.

16. (C) A second issue that poses a threat to Maputo II is Rajoelina's insistence, clarified in a TV interview on August 14, that his position as president of the transition is not up for discussion - even though the JMTM and the three other movements have publicly contradicted this. His rather specious argument is that the charter, signed on August 9 "nowhere mentions that the President of the Transition must be a president of consensus", and that while every other job may be negotiable, the lack of a specific abrogation of his "mandate" (based on a questionable High Constitutional Court verdict in March) indicates that he was meant to retain his job. No politician outside the HAT agrees.

17. (C) The security forces remain concerned about the specifics of Article 22 of the Charter, which provides for an eight-member Think Tank on National Defense and Security with broad powers to reform the military, but have not yet clarified the extent to which they may act on their opposition. Comments in the media indicate that the very concept of civilian control over the military remains troublesome for them, but it is unclear how much appetite the military has left for meddling if the politicians in Maputo manage to come to an agreement. The Forces for Change (reftel B), a grouping of HAT politicians opposed to Maputo I, appear to have been mollified by Rajoelina's August 14 interview, in which he proclaimed his claim on the presidency, and indicated that he may assert a veto on nominations to the transition government, despite the lack of any such explicit authority from the accords.

¶8. (C) Of the hundreds of positions to be negotiated in Maputo, there are a core group of 11 that will be watched most closely, in addition to the method of dividing up the 28 minister jobs. These 11 are the president and vice president of the transition, the prime minister and three deputy prime ministers, and the presidencies of the Congress (the lower house of parliament), the High Council on the Transition (the upper house of parliament), the High Court of the Transition, the National Economic and Social Council, and the Council for National Reconciliation. Other key bodies, including the planned defense think tank and the National Independent Electoral Commission, will elect their leaders from within their ranks or be run by consensus, thus leaving them out of the current negotiations.

¶9. (C) COMMENT: The brinkmanship currently playing out between Rajoelina and Ravalomanana will come to a head in the next three days before their scheduled rendez vous on August 24. Post has encouraged both movements to save their strength for Maputo II, but elder statesman Chissano may be more effective in helping to find a compromise that calms the splintering factions within the HAT and allows talks to proceed.

¶10. (C) COMMENT, continued: Of equal concern among the diplomatic missions in Antananarivo, however, is the question of implementation: the 10 days since Maputo I have demonstrated the need for a credible, powerful, and independent spokesperson for the JMTM, and by proxy the ICG-M. Their absence from Madagascar since Maputo has allowed political leaders and the media to interpret the accords as they saw fit, giving rise, and longevity, to the current conflicts on political detainees and the presidency. If all parties make it to Maputo, and a deal is struck, the JMFM should quickly move to establish a vocal presence in Madagascar as a possible unity government takes shape. END COMMENT.  
STROMAYER